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Pulpit Preaching

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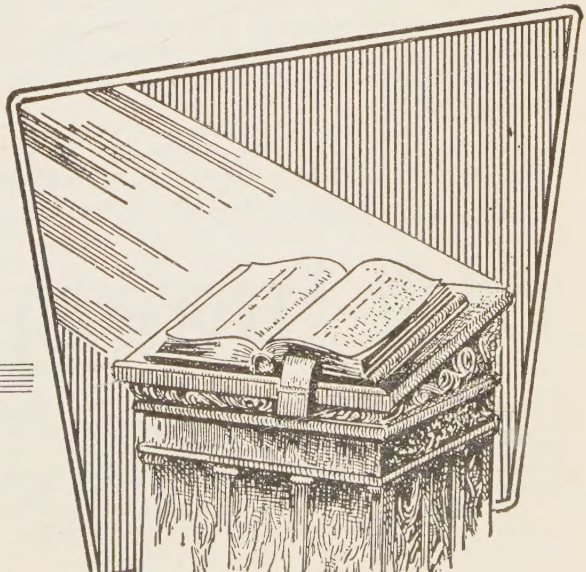

A PROFESSIONAL JOURNAL
FOR MINISTERS

Editorial Comments

This month's single emphasis is "Searchlight on Self," sermons which accentuate the individual's significance, his personal commitment to Christ, his discipleship and his stewardship.

Next month's themes will be "Persistence in Prayer" and "Disciplines of Stewardship." The August topics will be "How Large Is Your God?" and "Old Testament Heroes." The September themes will be "Table of the Lord" and "Great Words of Faith: I. Salvation."

—o—

Books For Pulpit Preaching

Two new companions for biblical study are commended most enthusiastically. *The Geography of the Bible* by Denis Baly, a long-time resident of Palestine and now associated with Kenyon College, is the first English geography to be published in the twentieth century. Comprehensive in sweep and scope, this book, which includes 100,000 words of text, nearly 100 photographs, and 47 maps, is a rich mine of the most pertinent and useful information for the understanding and interpretation of the Holy Land. An extensive indexing of Bible references and taxes further enhances the book's companionableness. (Harper, 303 pp., $4.95).

Biblical Archaeology by G. Ernest Wright of McCormick Theological Seminary is a handsome, double-sized book which brings into a single volume—and with remarkable clarity and verve — the whole range of archaeological investigations and findings as they directly illumine biblical history. This completely absorbing study, which treats the Bible story and subject matter chronologically and, of course, emphasizes recent excavations, is supplemented by 220 illustrations and also maps. (Westminster, 288 pp., $15.)

Through the Valleys: Nature's Clues to Victorious Living is a delightful and stimu-

(Continued on Page 24)

Offertory Prayers

LOWELL M. ATKINSON
First Methodist Church, Englewood, N. J

Now let Thy blessing be upon us, ou Heavenly Father, as we worship Thee, oper ing our hearts and opening our gifts to The in love and adoration and praise. Wilt Tho accept this act of devotion and adoratio to Christ, our Saviour. Amen.

* * * *

May Thy blessing be upon these gifts, ou Heavenly Father, and upon our hearts a we open them to Thee in love. Grant tha because of what we give tonight Thy king dom may advance in strength and in powe to the glory of Christ. Amen.

* * * *

Now very reverently, our Heavenly Fath er, we bow before Thee to acknowledge tha Thou art the giver of all of Life's good that Thou dost not withhold from us th things needful. So gratefully and gladly w praise Thy name and offer these gifts t show forth our thanksgiving to The through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

* * * *

Our Heavenly Father, now we bow befor Thee, happy in this opportunity to show ou love for Thee in our gifts. We remembe how Thou didst give Thyself in Jesus Chris to provide a salvation for us, and in Hi name we worship Thee with our gifts an offerings. Amen.

* * * *

Wilt Thou forgive us, O Lord, that w should be rich among men and not ric toward Thee. Now may we give gladly ou gifts to the strengthening of Thy Holy King dom through Christ, who gave his all. Amen.

* * * *

Our Heavenly Father, who hast taught u the gladness of the generous life, now w praise Thee for this opportunity to worshi with our gifts. Wilt Thou bless us. Wi Thou bless these gifts, and wilt Thou buil them into the structure of Thy Kingdom t the glory of Christ. Amen.

Pulpit Preaching

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hosen for Obedience

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Peter, an apostle of Jesus Christ . . . chosen and destined by God the Father and sanctified by the Spirit for obedience to Jesus Christ. — I Peter 1:1

The salutation of a letter is seldom given uch attention either by the writer or by e reader. "Dear John," we begin. Or "My ar Mrs. Smith," or "Gentlemen," or perps "Dearest Mary." As quickly as we can, turn to what we really want to say, and e salutation is to the letter what the vesule is to a house—a useful device for getng in, but no place to settle down for iendly conversation.

But not quite so with "The First Letter Peter." "Why have a salutation at all if u do not plan to make good use of it?" eter seems to have thought, and then he rote those words which speak so sternly the life he wanted men to live: "Peter, apostle of Jesus Christ, to the exiles of e dispersion in Pontus, Galatia, Cappacia, Asia, and Bithynia, chosen and desned by God the Father and sanctified by e Spirit for obedience to Jesus Christ and r sprinkling with his blood: May grace d peace be multiplied to you."

The exact identification of these "exiles the dispersion" is not necessary. They ere Christians. They were brothers of ours Christ. They might have been ourselves, d see how the ancient writer describes the ll of God for their lives on the earth.

I

First of all, they were "chosen and desned by God the Father," and there you ve one of the most disturbing and fruitl mysteries of human existence.

Shakespeare was the third of eight chilen. His father was a glover, a dealer in des and perhaps a butcher. His mother as a farmer's daughter. And why should at have been the earthly womb of literry genius?

Many people have said that George Fox as psychopathic, and none could claim that e was not at least eccentric. His life was rratic and unpredictable. He saw weird sions. He heard strange voices. And why ould such a man have been the founder the Quaker movement, the first of the Friends, the root from which have grown so many sturdy affirmations of truth and so many healing ministries to pain?

One boy is born to wealth and affluence. Another boy is born to poverty and deprivation. And why? One girl first greets the light of day in the antiseptic carefulness of a modern hospital. Another girl is dumped unwanted in the dirty squalor of a lonely bedroom in the slums. And why? The bodies of some people are healthy, strong and lovely. The bodies of other people are sick, weak and ugly. And why? Through neither choice nor merit of their own millions of men and women live in the United States of America, the land of the free and the home of the brave. Through neither choice nor sin of their own millions of other men and women live in China, the land of famine and floods, the home of bondage and fear. And why?

It is obvious, of course, that much of the pleasure and pain of life are not directly traceable to God. My parents have played a large part in the provision of my own blessings—my wife, my children, my friends. Greedy human beings have had a great deal to do with the hardships of other people—ignorant human beings, twisted human beings, cruel human beings. Many a foolish word has been said about a God who ordains each sentence we speak and deed we do, and much that calls itself the will of God is nothing but a blasphemy of him.

Yet when we search out the real roots of our being, only two conclusions wait for us to choose between them. Either all is chance and hence the happenings of life which man does not control are wholly void of meaning, or behind the seeming chaos God works out his sovereign will. Hence man's greatest need is that he see and understand. And once we make the basic Christian affirmation that God actually exists, almighty and eternal, the very least that we can say of him is that which Albert Einstein said: "I cannot believe that God plays dice with the cosmos."

Somewhere in the history of each least

creature of the earth there is a place reserved for those words from "The First Letter of Peter," "chosen and destined by God the Father." When we think about ourselves as Christians, the words have point which simply cannot be escaped. Why were we born in a land where Christianity would never dwell beyond our fingertips? Why were we nourished in a Christian home, sustained by a Christian church, and daily faced with countless witnesses to Christian faith and life? It was not blind chance. It was not meaningless fate. And even when we reached the age of discretion, the truth was less that we took than that we were taken. Others had never heard of Christ, but we had. Others were so born that the Christian faith was scarcely possible for them, but that faith was surely ours and for the most part through no effort of our own.

Where we are, we were put. What we have, we were given. For the life that we live, we were chosen. We were chosen and destined by God the Father.

II

But this does not exhaust the salutation of the letter. Its readers were chosen and destined by God the Father, but they were also "sanctified by the spirit"; and here we begin to see the nature of that for which Christians are chosen and destined.

To be sanctified is to be set apart, to be blessed, to be hallowed, to be dedicated, to be consecrated. When a man is sanctified, he has passed the milestone beyond which what he receives is of far less importance to him than what he gives. Richly blessed, he is therefore richly obligated; and chosen and destined by God the Father, he cannot rest content until he finds the answer to the questions: "Chosen to go where? Destined to do what?

When Joseph rose to mighty power in the land of Egypt, he had been chosen and destined by God the Father; but he was not sanctified by the Spirit until he fed his brothers in their need. When the Lord took Amos from the flock, he had been chosen and destined by God the Father; but he was not not sanctified by the Spirit until he prophesied to God's people Israel. When the light from Heaven flashed on Paul as he sped down the road to Damascus, he had been chosen and destined by God the Father; but he was not sanctified by the Spirit until through hunger and thirst, through toil and hardship, through lashings and stonings he took the glad tidings of Christ across the lands and seas which had not heard of him.

Some months ago the newspapers told about the newest interest of one of the richest men in the world. It was the building of a fabulous tropical resort on the island of Andros in the Bahamas. There in the sunny, breeze-cooled climate of the splendid white beaches, he had spent $2,000,000 to build a well-fitted yachting center and a marvelous Lighthouse Club with appointments in silver. Another $1,500,000 was already on its way to the project, and as much as $10,000,000 had been set aside for eventual use. The club's initiation fee was $500. Dues were $300 a year. Accommodations were $50 a day. Homesites were $10,000 an acre. And a single blackball from the board of social arbiters could keep an applicant away.

Think about the men who are capable of conceiving, initiating, completing and occupying such a paradise of earthly comfort and pleasure. Are they chosen and destined by God the Father? Of course they are. These are five-talent men. These are men of skill and power; and if God was their Creator, their strength is God-endowed. But are these men sanctified by the Spirit? We have to move with caution here, for we know so little about the goodness of the ones of whom we speak, and we know so much about the evil of the ones who do the speaking. Yet in a world so filled with hunger, homelessness and pain can they be truly sanctified by God who withhold so much of healing from the wounds which break God's heart? And if they say that what they have is theirs to use as they themselves decide, does not God sometimes look upon them as upon the locomotive engineer who will not stop for passengers but takes his great long train across the hills and valleys for his own enjoyment only, or upon the father who tells his starving son, "It's hard to see you dying, my boy, but I like steak too much myself to share my plate with you"?

What Peter said about the Christians of his day is still the sober truth about ourselves. "You are a chosen race," he wrote, "a royal priesthood, a holy nation, God's own people." But that was not the end of the matter, for Peter did not close his sentences at that point. "You are a chosen race," he said, "a royal priesthood, a holy nation, God's own people, *that you may declare the wonderful deeds of him who called you out of darkness into his marvelous light.*" And if the stabbing call to stewardship is sounded toward the men who whirl away the happy days on Andros, does

erefore have a lesser meaning for you or
me?

Chosen and destined by God the Father,
are not our own masters. Sanctified by
e Spirit, we are not our own lords. Down
rough the dark unknown the hand of God
scends to rest upon our shoulders, and a
rong, still voice speaks straight to ears
nich often wish that it would go away.
ou are mine," it says. "I have chosen you
r myself. I have blessed you past all other
oples of the world. Therefore I will sum-
on you to labor. I will lay upon you bur-
ns. I will give you as a light to the nations,
at my salvation may reach to the end of
e earth."

III

Here we come to the third clause in this
rt of Peter's salutation. His readers were
hosen and destined by God the Father and
nctified by the Spirit *for obedience to Je-
s Christ.*"

In one of the famous cartoons by Walt
lly, Pogo and the fox are shown walking
rough the swamp one day when they come
on the rabbit carrying an umbrella. His
nd is outstretched, and he is peering anx-
usly toward the sky. Obviously he is ex-
cting rain. "He looks like a frugal type,"
e fox remarks. "Yep," replies Pogo, "he
ved for a rainy day, constant." "Did the
ar old chap accumulate much?" inquires
e fox, and Pogo gives him the inventory:
,319 umbrellas, 16,223 pairs of rubbers,
ur rainhats, two sets of waterwings, an'
rowboat. Now we live in a dry section
here it ain't rained since 1923, but when
do, man, is he gone be ready!"

The trouble with the rabbit was that he
as ready for the wrong thing, and that is
e trouble with many Christians. Chosen
d destined by God the Father and sancti-
ed by the Spirit, they are ready for peace
mind and quietness of heart; they are
epared for physical comfort and economic
curity; and they daily wait to be rewarded
ith the signs of God's approval and favor.
ut they are not ready for obedience to Je-
s Christ; they are not prepared for the
ocking and the scourging; they have no
nging for a cross. And they do not under-
and that apart from their obedience to
sus Christ there is no meaning in their
ing chosen and destined and sanctified.

It is not simply to general goodness that
e are called as Christians. We are sum-
oned as Christians to be "good" as Jesus
imself was "good." We are commissioned
o live as he lived, to love as he loved, to
peak as he spoke, and to do as he did. We
re set apart to see the implications of his life for the time and place which we can influence, and being in the church the only body he can claim on earth, we are to do for him today what tongue and feet and hands once did for him some nineteen hundred years ago. For we are not chosen to refrain from robbing banks or to be kind to dumb animals: We are chosen for obedience to Jesus Christ.

Moreover, it is not to ordinary freedom that we are called as Christians. To be sure, we are not forced to pledge allegiance to Jesus, and there is nothing compulsory about our entrance into his band of apostles. But once the great commitment is finally made, the freedom to choose is a limited freedom. Now we are men under orders. We go where we are sent. We say what we are bidden. We do what we are told. For we are not destined to do that which is right in our own eyes: We are destined for obedience to Jesus Christ.

And still further, it is not to success that we are called as Christians. In the deepest sense of the word, consequences are the department of God. We are summoned not so much to understand as to trust, not so much to give approval as to give assistance, not so much to be outwardly triumphant as to be inwardly faithful. It is for man to carry the cross. It is for God to open the tomb. For we are not sanctified by the Spirit to be powerful or popular or victorious: we are sanctified by the Spirit for obedience to Jesus Christ.

To pray for the spiteful, to do good to the hateful, to love the enemy, to fed the sheep, to preach the gospel, to heal the sick and raise the dead and cast out devils — this is in part the charter given those who take upon themselves the name of Jesus. There are many of us Christians who fit quite easily the pattern set by the young duke of whom Browning has written:

All that the old dukes had been, without
knowing it,
This duke would fain know he was,
without being it.

But it was not for this that Jesus robbed the fishing boats of their captains and their crews along the shores of Galilee, nor is this the life to which he beckons men from office desks today. We are chosen and destined by God the Father to be perfect as he himself is perfect. We are sanctified by the Spirit for obedience to Jesus Christ—immediate obedience, unquestioning obedience, glad-hearted obedience, absolute obedience.

IV

And now come the final words in the

identification of the readers of this letter: " . . . and for sprinkling with his blood." The ancient ceremonies of his people must have been in Peter's mind as he wrote that phrase. He must have remembered sacrificial altars, cherished rituals and holy vows. He must have thought about the new covenant of God with his people, sealed by the death of Christ and bringing salvation to all who believed. But is there no sense in which to be sprinkled with the blood of Christ defines obedience to him? Is there no sense in which it represents a call to special sacrifice and self-denial on our own part?

Any one of us would like to walk the hills above the town of Nazareth with Christ, or stroll with him along the Galilean lake. Any one of us would freely ride with him on Palm Sunday while the crowds spread their garments before him, shouting his praises and calling him king. Any one of us would gladly be with him in heaven, sitting there where James and John once wanted to sit, close to his side in the glory of his kingdom.

But that is not the life for which we now are chosen. It has been said that "the path of progress and the path of altruism are one." Thornton Wilder followed the idea a little further when he said that "in love's service only the wounded soldiers can serve." And the late William Temple traced the thought to cosmic roots when he pointed out that "the kingdom of God was founded when its King was crowned with thorns." Being chosen "for obedience to Jesus Christ," we are also summoned "for sprinkling with his blood." That means, of course, that in the mysterious providence of God we Christians have been set apart to receive those divine gifts which are the fruit of Christ's death, but does it not also mean that in the mysterious providence of God we Christians have been set apart to share with Christ his heartaches, pain, agony and final sacrifice? Does it not also mean that we have been chosen to take up our own crosses and bear them side by side with him up all the windy Calvaries which men have made since first they crucified him nineteen hundred years ago?

One day Theodore Roosevelt had been speaking sternly to his son Kermit, and finally he reached down to shake him by the shoulder. But Kermit's sister Ethel began to cry, and she touched her father's arm. "Shake me, father," she begged. "Shake me!" That frame of mind represents the peculiar genius of authentic Christian faith. In the maintenance of public education, in the support of the church, in the provisions for political government, in the attacks on radical prejudice, in the preservation of our essential freedoms — that frame of mind constitutes the special power in genuine Christian commitment. They who follow Jesus are called not to comfort but to struggle, not to gain but to loss, not to pride but to pity, not to peace but to war. They find life's meaning not in how much good they can get, but in how much good they can give. They find life's satisfaction not in being treated justly themselves but in refusing to let their fellows be treated unjustly. They find life's joy not in avoiding crosses but in carrying them.

Chosen and destined by God the Father and sanctified by the Spirit for obedience to Jesus Christ, we learn at last the incredible truth that nothing but sacrifice can clear the road for God's salvation of His People — nothing but one man laying down his life for his friends, one man loving his enemies, one man sanctifying himself for the sake of his brothers in the family of God their common Father. The disciple is not above his teacher, nor the servant above his master; and if Jesus found no road to Joseph's garden except the one which passed through Calvary, what cause have we to think that we shall walk a smoother way ourselves? When we were chosen as Christians, we were chosen for sprinkling with blood — the blood of unmeasured love, the blood of freely accepted sacrifice, the blood of Jesus Christ our Lord.

But one day the miracle happens! As Peter phrased the fact himself, grace and peace are multiplied to us. Losing the life we tried to keep, we find that we have kept the life we gave away. Sheathing the sword that will not save, we see that we have drawn the sword that does. The church quiescent becomes the church militant. The church militant becomes the church triumphant. And sharing Christ's pain, we discover that we also share his joy.

So Little, Yet So Much

HAROLD COOKE PHILLIPS, First Baptist Church, Cleveland, Ohio

Scripture Lesson — Matthew 25:14-30

It is a matter of common knowledge that not all of us are equally endowed. Our Declaration of Independence says, "We hold these truths to be self-evident—that all men

e created equal; that they are endowed by eir Creator with certain unalienable hts." This statement is true in the sense at in God's sight we are all equal. But we tainly are not equal in the sense that we e all equally endowed. There are many aywrights, but how many Shakespeares? any painters, but how many Rembrandts Michelangelos? many artists, but how any Rachmaninoffs or Carusos?

Now the fact that some of us are more ghly endowed than others may lead those us who are less gifted to feel that we ally do not amount to much. It may have en for this reason that the Master told at familiar story of the talents. These ree men in the parable were not equally dowed. One man was given five talents, other two, and the third one. The man o had only one apparently did not think was worth his while to bother with, so buried the talent and at last returned it the donor as he had received it—no more, less. "Here you have what is yours."

I

Now in the first place consider what these ree men who differed in their abilities yet d in common. For one thing each was *ven* what he had. The gifts were not all of ual value, but the three men of the parable ere all alike in this—that they were *all cipients*. If we understood this we should freed from two of the modern demons hich psychiatrists are constantly trying to rive out of us, namely, the superiority and e inferiority complexes. The superiority mplex, expressed in our foolish pride, eans that one thinks he has somehow man-factured his talents. It has been said that e man who boasts of being self-made re-eves the Creator of great responsibility. On e other hand, the man with an inferiority mplex, touchy and overly sensitive, fails accept gracefully his limited endowment nd pretends to be more than he is. Neither these self-defeating attitudes could get to rst base if only we remembered that we ave naught we have not received but are l recipients of God's gifts, be they many few.

Once a friend of Albert Einstein referred him in conversation as a great man. Ein-tein replied, "I have nothing that I have ot received." Is this why Abraham Lincoln oved to repeat the words, "Oh, why should e spirit of mortal be proud?" or why the salmist said, "Not unto us, O Lord, not nto us, but unto thy name give glory"?

But these men were equal, not only be-ause they were alike recipients, but also because upon all three was laid equally the responsibility of using what was given. Jesus said, "Unto whomsoever much is given, of him shall much be required." He did not mean that unto whomsoever little is given, of him shall nothing be required. God does not expect from me the returns He awaits from some more gifted person. But he does expect a return commensurate with what he has entrusted to me.

II

Again, each of these men had had an opportunity to invest his talent. The man who failed to use his simply could not honestly have said, "Lord, I carried this talent about with me trying to find some place that I could use it, but every door was locked, every gate barred against me. There was nothing left for me to do with it but bury it. Here it is just as you gave it me." He could not honestly have said that. No more can you or I.

Different then though these three men were in their gifts, they were all alike in that—

1. They were all recipients,
2. They were all under a like responsibility,
3. They all had opportunities to use what they had received.

Now let us ask, "Why did the man with the one talent fail to use it?" Well, for one thing perhaps because since what was bestowed on him seemed so small, he might have argued that to neglect it would make no possible difference. We are all tempted to feel how much we would do were we someone else. Had we the wealth of Mr. So and So, or his great influence or his power or his personal gifts, how much we would do! Such thoughts are irrelevant. The real question is, "What use am I making of what I have?" No man is judged by what he would do were he someone else, but rather by what he is doing with the gifts he has.

I wonder if we have ever thought how indispensible is the contribution of us less gifted folk to the ongoing work of the world. During the past summer our party took buses to Chartres, just outside Paris, to see the famous cathedral which is said to contain the finest example of thirteenth century stained glass in the world. There stands the cathedral with its two spires, one Gothic, one Romanesque. That imposing structure with its graceful lines, its flying buttresses, its noble form was the dream of some master builder, or architect as we would now say. But that dream would never

have been brought to fulfilment but for hundreds and thousands of nameless men with less gifted imagination, less creative power, but no less faithful hearts and hands, who through their honest labor made that dream come true. One may say as he looks at some impressive structure, "But for some talented artist or architect we never would have had that beautiful bridge or that magnificant building." True! Only do not fail to add, "But for numberless less talented folk unknown and unsung, we should never have laid eyes on it. It would have remained a dream unrealized, a vision that vanished."

That is a story of all life. The greatly gifted and talented among us could never get anywhere but for the help of the rest of us. Rubinstein can play the piano with great skill. He stirs us, moves us deeply as he interprets one of the great masters. Rubinstein, however, cannot make a piano. But for the work of those whose fingers are less skilled, less sensitive, the great artist would be unable to communicate his gifts. And even when the artist sits at his instrument, what would he be without an audience? Those of us who hear a great artist may not know one note from another. We may lack quite any musical talent except that of appreciation. All we can do is listen in a quiet and receptive mood. How little that seems. Ah, but how much! For an artist without his audience would be only half an artist. Indeed, he would be no artist at all. He would be like a lovely boat lying on the beach with no tide to float it.

All the great men of the world who have risen to heights are like aviators. The pilot rises far above our little earth, above its storms, above its clouds until as one pilot of mystic mood said, it seemed as though he "touched the face of God." But do you know how many men it takes to keep one of these "pilots of the purple twilight" up there? Not one of these men who soar could get off the earth but for the ground crew. And that is a parable of life. The men who soar, who reach the heights in any field of human endeavor whatsoever, could never get off the ground or stay up but for multitudes of lesser gifted folk who through the faithful performance of their duty make possible such achievement. Ah, never despise the talent because it is small. It is the one talent people that keep the world going.

And that keep the church going, too. During the past week I visited one of our ministers and, as I fear ministers always do, we talked shop. In the process of the conversation he showed me a card on which the name of a prospective member was written. Below the name was much pertinent information—the denomination to which the gentleman belonged, the size of his family, his church connection in the city from which he had come, and so on. I said to my friend, "How did you get the name of this prospect?" He replied that one of the members of the church he serves had sat by this gentleman on the Rapid one morning when going to work. They entered into conversation. The conversation turned to religion and the church. In addition the stranger was then given a hearty invitation to church, an invitation which he accepted. The result is that he will soon be a member of that church.

I said to my friend, "Was this member one of your officers, a deacon, a trustee, or a committee member?" "No," he replied, "he holds no office." I thought that was such a fine spirit! Here was a man who was using the talent he had. He may not have been as gifted, as eloquent, as able, as widely known as some of his fellow members. But that was completely irrelevant. Is any man in any church incapable of speaking a word in season for God and his church? I hardly think so. Perhaps we think it is too small a task. Perhaps we are tempted to leave that to those who we imagine are more able than are we, more gifted along such lines.

I am thinking of one of the great preachers of another century, regarded by many as the greatest of his age—Charles Haddon Spurgeon. When Spurgeon was a young man he was under what our fathers would call "conviction of sin." His soul was troubled. He wanted to find God and the way of salvation. He went to hear many of the great preachers of his day but always left as he came, with his spiritual needs unmet. One Sunday morning he had planned to hear another great preacher, but the weather being very bad he walked down to a primitive Methodist church nearby, located on an obscure street. There was no preacher. At the time for service a man got up from the congregation, walked to the pulpit and announced as his text: "Look unto me, and be ye saved, all the ends of the earth."

Since there were only a few people present, there was an intimacy and an informality about the service. Acting on one of those insights which come to the pure in heart, the man, looking at Spurgeon, said, "Young man, you are in trouble." He was. "Look to Jesus and be saved," said the preacher. Spurgeon did. That marked the turning point of his life, and it was brought about not by the so-called great preachers of his

y, but by a man whose very name is unown to us.

Ah, do not despise your one talent. God able at time to work wonders with it. sus was always emphasizing the importce of little things: a cup of water, feedg the hungry, visiting the sick, the widow's te. All of these may seem trivial to us. But y are not to God in so far as they are pressions of our love and commensurate th our abilities.

There is waiting a work where only
your hands can avail,
And so if you falter, a chord of the
music will fail.

III

Now there may have been another reaon why the man buried his talent. Not only ight he have felt it was too small to make y difference, but perhaps that even if he ed it he would still remain obscure. If one highly gifted, when he uses his talents he n make quite a splash. He becomes widely nown. He is written about or talked about. ne papers or magazines carry his picture. is name becomes a household word. His any talents make him famous. But if you nly have one talent, though you use it, nody knows much about *you*. You may reain in obscurity.

Now one does not mean to infer that the reatly gifted use their gifts because thereby ey become widely known. As a matter of ct it is heartening to realize that some of ur greatest men do not give a snap for otoriety, and the greater they are the more umble they become. It is their work, not emselves, that concerns them. It is so sy for one to "think of himself more high- than he ought to think." I remember readng how when someone was trying to imress the late governor of New York, Alfred . Smith, with his importance, Governor mith said to him, "Push your finger into bucket of water. Now pull it out. Do you e what a big hole you have left!"

Jesus, of course, encountered this desire or personal recognition among his disciples. ome of them were not so much concerned bout the kingdom for which he was about o give his life, but the chief seats in the ingdom which they were anxious to occupy. We will not invest our talents, our lives, in his kingdom, work for it, unless thereby e gain some prominent position."

Now, as I see it, there is only one cure or this quite familiar malady. And that I ake it is one of the most important lessons f this story. It is this: Since our talents, e they few or many, are given us by God, obviously it is to him that we are all at last accountable. As this story teaches, he does not judge us by the size, the amount of our returns, since obviously those who have been given much will make a bigger return. He judges us rather by the degree of fidelity with which we have employed our gifts, be they many or few.

This introduces a new, well-nigh revolutionary standard of evaluating people. By our standards the great man is the greatly gifted man. By God's standard the great man is the *greatly faithful* man. "Well done, thou good and faithful servant: thou hast been faithful over a few things, I will make thee ruler over many things: enter thou into the joy of thy lord."

It would be quite unrealistic to say that any of us is wholly indifferent to the opinions of others. If we were we should be inhuman. But it makes all the difference in the world what our motivation is. It is one thing to *seek* the recognition of others. It is another when such recognition is the by-product of a nobler incentive, when as the Master said we are not primarily concerned about being "seen of men," but by the Father "who seeth in secret." Surely God's "well done" ought to be worth more than man's hurrahs! And that "well done" is given just as truly to the man who uses his one talent as to him with five. How little, yet in God's sight, how much!

Here then are two possible reasons why the man with one talent sometimes neglects it:

1. The talent is so small no one will miss it.
2. It is so small no one will praise him.

The man in the parable, however, gave neither of these reasons. The reason he gave was that he was afraid. He argued that since he had only one talent to invest, it was risky business to use it; for if he lost it he would have lost all he had. "Safety First" was his motto.

How wrong he was! We never really save our talent when we bury it. God's law for life is, "If you do not use it, you lose it." Perhaps we have only a little faith. Bury the little faith we have and we lose it. Let it be the incentive to courageous endeavor, to daring adventure, and we increase it. Our gift for prayer may be small. Tie it up in a napkin and it becomes smaller. Use it—pray—and, lo, it is enlarged. Bury the gift of friendliness and we are less friendly. But send it forth in thoughts of good will, in kindly words and gracious deeds, and, lo, how it expands and enlarges. Do not bury your talent because it seems small.

Heaven doth with us as we with
torches do;
Not light them for themselves: for
if our virtues
Did not go forth of us, 'twere all
alike
As if we had them not. Spirits are
not finely touched
But to fine issues.

Let us remember that what we give in money, in service, in our concern, is not judged in and of itself, but in relation to what we have received. Remember, too, that God's "well done" is spoken just as truly to him who has been faithful in little as to him who has been faithful in much.

When we serve with that faith *nothing* is really little, since it reveals the largeness of our spirit, and it is the spirit that giveth life.

You—and Your Responsibility

CHARLES F. JACOBS. First Congregational Church, Waterloo, Iowa

He who is faithful in a very little is also faithful in much; and he who is dishonest in a very little is dishonest also in much. — Luke 16:10

In his book, *Life Among the Doctors,* Paul DeKruif tells about his friendship with a young man, the medical director of a large pharmaceutical house, who was perplexed by the contradictions in modern life. The detonation of the A-bomb had thrown the youth into a moral quandry. Mr. DeKruif pointed out that most of the scientists had seemed to be gentle and dedicated men. Yet they were the ones who had finally opened Pandora's box. They had hatched this A-bomb. And they had seemed such innocent magicians, like the old medieval sorcerer who had worked out the secret of creating water out of nothing. While the old wizard was away, his apprentice discovered the secret formula and turned it on, but he didn't know how to turn it off. If the old sorcerer had not returned, the whole world would have been inundated. "You've got something there," the young man said. "It isn't the original scientists' fault. What we've got now is just scientific curiosity—perverted." To this, Mr. DeKruif gave the chilling rejoinder: "What we've got now is irresponsibility."

Lay that observation alongside the day's news and you will not be inclined to argue with Mr. DeKruif. When you have finished with the daily chronicle of events, you are likely to say: "Indeed, what we've got is irresponsibility!" Men high in labor leadership, falsifying documents, defaulting on honor, and insisting that one code of conduct applies to them, while the masses must abide by another; young men and women in a stolen car heading across the continent, with plans to rob and steal for their daily bread, and their miserable fiasco ending in the death of an innocent citizen; men in business seeking by unfair means to influence government; elected representatives to the nation's capitol abdicating their ideals; universities yielding to mob law, the rule of the jungle; young men driving a fraternity brother far from his home and stupidly consigning him to death; nations preaching democracy and practicing totalitarianism; and powerful journalistic forces, reaching millions of people, majoring in sex and human misery, because, as they argue, this is what the people want. All of these events you have read about in your daily paper. Yes, what we've got is irresponsibility!

In a time such as this it is difficult for the idealist to maintain faith in his ideals when he sees many of his fellowmen giving lip service to these ideals but betraying them in practice. The cynic can certainly offer convincing evidence for his argument: "Honesty doesn't pay."

When I reflect on these dark spots in our contemporary society, I am haunted by the teachings and the faith of the man of Galilee. We need to turn back to him to recover our perspective. On his way from Galilee to Jerusalem, in the company of his disciples, he had much to say about the responsibilities of his kingdom. "He who is faithful in a very little is faithful also in much; and he who is dishonest in a very little is dishonest also in much."

I

Consider, for one thing, that Jesus insisted unless the individual is willing to assume the obligations of shared living, the good life is impossible. This lesson of individual responsibility is the essential lesson which each of us must master. Over one of the entrances to the school my son attends is the motto: "Equal rights to all; success to him who strives." That is a noble and stirring sentiment. I have no quarrel with it. But it is not of first importance. Before a man can have equal rights, he must acknowledge and accept the responsibilities that go with his privileges. To paraphrase a

ne of James Bryce: "Life is more than ghts; it is responsibility." You do not have ghts without obligations. Before one can ve equal rights or achieve success in any eaningful sense, one must come to terms ith the great principle: "He who is faithl in a very little is faithful also in much; nd he who is dishonest in a very little is shonest also in much."

Jesus placed this principle at the very nter of his kingdom. He extended an open vitation to his countrymen to join with m, but the conditions for membership in s society depended upon their ability to ssume responsibility. His journey from alilee to Jerusalem, by way of the Transordan Valley, was scarcely under way when number of well-wishers offered to follow m. But, as Edwin Markham has said, esus wanted to be certain they "could dare e vision and endure." He made clear the bligations of discipleship. In some of the arshest words he ever used, he responded those who were asking for admittance in- his kingdom. To the man who said: "Lord, will follow you wherever you go," Jesus nswered, "Foxes have holes, and birds of e air have nests; but the Son of man has owhere to lay his head." To another he aid, "Follow me." But this man said, "Let e first go and bury my father." Jesus said him, "Leave the dead to bury their own ead; but as for you, go and proclaim the ingdom of God." Another said, "I will follow you, Lord; but let me first say farewell those at my home." Speedier than a rapier rust came the answer: "No one who puts is hand to the plow and looks back is fit r the kingdom of God."

On this same journey, weeks later, two of esus' disciples, James and John, so confient of their Master's ultimate political success in Jerusalem, made a shattering request of their Teacher. Now was the time, hey believed, to play politics. Stealing a march on the other disciples, they came to im and asked for honored positions in his ingdom. This must have been a bitter moment for Jesus. Here were James and John, wo of his trusted disciples, in whom he had onfided the secrets of his kingdom, showing themselves insensible to his vision. He was onfronted by the irresponsibility of his riends. He said to them: "You do not know what you are asking. Are you able to drink he cup that I am to drink?" Unhesitatingly they replied, "We are able." Jesus had to ell them a hard truth; the honors in his ingdom were for those who had been reponsible. "You will drink my cup," he said, but to sit at my right hand and at my left is not mine to grant, but it is for those for whom it has been prepared." It was another way of saying: "He who is faithful in a very little is faithful also in much; and he who is dishonest in a very little is dishonest also in much."

Jesus made individual responsibility a condition of membership in his kingdom. Loyalty to his society was to be on a spiritual basis, rather than on the basis of blood relationship. He put it bluntly: "Therefore, whoever does not renounce all that he has cannot be my disciple." "Whoever comes to me and does not hate his own father and mother and wife and children and brothers and sisters, yes, and even his own life, he cannot be my disciple." No irresponsibility would be tolerated in his society!

II

Consider, also, that central to character building is this principle of uncompromising honesty. You cannot divide this principle, saying, be honest here, but over here you can cheat a little. Character breaks down at that point. "He who is faithful in a very little is faithful also in much," said Jesus. The converse is equally true, "He who is dishonest in a very little is dishonest also in much." Character never breaks down all at once. Failure in character is the end result of the fiendish notion that one can be dishonest in little ways and get by with it. But the law of life is irrevocable: "Whatsoever a man sows that shall he also reap."

Not long ago I listened to a sports enthusiast, a journalist and television reporter. He spoke approvingly of the deception, the open bribery, that goes on in some of the great athletic contests of the nation. Then he added, "Those kids are out there to win," and with a chuckle, he continued, "If they get by with a little cheating, that's all right with me." I enjoy athletics, the pursuit of the game, but the notion that the big thing is to win, even if it means cheating, is a luxury we cannot afford. The embracing of dishonesty is far too great a price to pay for victory on the field of contest. Better to walk in the regal robes of honorable defeat than to march in the parade, draped in shameful rags of dishonorable victory. If we persist in this sort of thinking, then, in God's name, let's face the fact: We have no right to be surprised or scornful when, later, these same young people accept positions of responsibility in business, in government, in professional life, and then sell their vote, embezzle our financial institutions, or default on honor. We have sown to the whirl-

wind and we must reap the devastation of the whirlwind.

Frequently one hears it said that the home is the basic unit of our society and that the future of our nation will be no stronger than the homes that make up the nation. It follows, therefore, that the business of the home is to inculcate in the new generation the importance of the principle of uncompromising honesty. Out of the conversation that takes place around the family table, your children are taking their castings for the future. From you, mother and father, your children will learn the things they consider important. The sneer at the school, the church, the government, or the wing at some small irresponsibility, may yield a bitter harvest in the lives of your children. Happy indeed will be the home that never forgets the great principle: "He who is faithful in a very little is faithful also in much; and he who is dishonest in a very little is dishonest also in much."

Apply this Christian principal to the business world. Here, too, it is an essential. One who is entrusted with great business matters can overlook dishonesty in small matters only at his own peril. In the past few weeks, through the Congressional investigations, we have witnessed what has happened to men who dared to believe that they could violate the law of personal honesty and get by with it. It was a sickening sight, the leader of a great labor organization, admitting to the nation that funds had been irregularly used; that while it was not, he felt, good practice in general, in his case—he felt it was acceptable. What fools this law of personal integrity makes of us when we disregard it! You understand, of course, that these failures in character are to be found among all kinds and all sorts of men in all kinds and in all sorts of positions—in business, in labor, in politics, in school, and even in church. S u c h irresponsibility, wherever it occurs, is intolerable. We Christians should not miss this lesson: "He who is faithful in a very little is faithful also in much; and he who is dishonest in a very little is dishonest also in much." To build on any other foundation is to build on foundations of sand.

III

Another thing, concerning *you* and your responsibility, needs to be said. The achievement of the best things in life depends upon the individual being faithful in the discharge of small responsibilities. This was the eloquent truth so vividly set forth in the old nursery rhyme: "For the want of a nail the shoe was lost; for want of a shoe the horse was lost; for want of a horse the rider was lost; for want of a rider the battle was lost; for want of a battle the kingdom was lost; and all for the want of a horseshoe nail."

Apply this principle of absolute honesty where you will and the result is always the same. The big achievements in our lives represent the doing of a multitude of small things with ardor and faithfulness. This church, I suppose, to some may look like a big thing, easily achieved. But what is a church? If it is worthy of the name Christian, a church is a group of people doing many small things in the name and in the spirit of the Master and doing them faithfully. When we gather on Sunday morning for a great service of worship it may, I suppose, appear to some that it just happens. But back of an hour of worship are the hopes, the dreams, and more than that—the work of hundreds of people, each in his own way, assuming some small responsibility until in the aggregate, the great thing has been achieved. Through the labors of many people, some of them doing small, unspectacular duties, Sunday after Sunday, we open the gates of the temple through which all of us may enter to worship God in the beauty of holiness.

One of the things we all want is universal peace. A journalist friend of mine who has just returned from a three month and forty thousand mile journey around the world says that his faith in humanity has been greatly increased. No place throughout all his travels, which took him into more than forty countries, did he find one single person who did not want peace. Man has become civilized, but during the last thousand years we have had a thousand wars. In the twentieth century we have fashioned war into an art. Now we know that war is the enemy of the race; man must destroy war or war will destroy man.

But how do we destroy war? We must, of course give some credit to the big things. Armies do hold back the aggressor and give us another chance to make peace. The United Nations is a big thing, encompassing more than eighty nations, and is a valuable instrument for peace. But the success of the United Nations depends upon multitudes of individuals wanting peace, doing the things that make for peace, being faithful in small responsibilities. Let us give credit to the efforts of statesmen who, in top flight councils, work for peace. But in the end the can succeed only if multitudes of individuals who, wanting peace, abide by the Christian

rinciple: "He who is faithful in a very tle is faithful also in much; and he who dishonest in a very little is dishonest also much."

Another thing we want desperately to ve is democracy. What is the strength of emocracy? The cornerstone of democracy individual responsibility. In America it is hundred seventy millions of people being ithful in the little responsibilities of tizenship. Never say in our society that you unt for nothing or that your vote is unportant. I shan't forget an address given a young man who had suffered through e Korean war. He had been cold and ungry. He had suffered the torment of the amned. He was speaking to a comfortable roup at a time when corruption in governent was being revealed. He said to that mfortable audience: "In America, we get e kind of government we deserve." If we re faithful in little things that kind of living produces good government.

There is a story, perhaps only a legend, oncerning a lad in the Revolutionary War. During the winter at Valley Forge the lad eserted and was traveling through the ilderness toward his home in northern New York. As he fled toward his home, the wilderness rang with voices. An inner voice kept troubling him with the thought: "You are the one in whom liberty is lost. You are the one in whom liberty is saved." When he could endure it no longer, he returned to Valley Forge, rejoined his comrades, and died in the battle at Yorktown.

I have been suggesting the importance which Jesus attached to faithfulness in little things. We often look at small duties with a jaundiced eye, because we have believed so devotedly in big things. If you want to compliment an American, tell him about big things—big highways, big cars, big building, big industries, big labor, big government, big schools, big churches. Bigness in itself is not evil, but let us not be so foolish as to equate it with goodness. Size is no measure of ultimate value. The future belongs not to the big things, but to individuals who have remembered the great teaching—which has come to us across nearly two thousand years: "He who is faithful in a very little is faithful also in much; and he who is dishonest in a very little is dishonest also in much." If enough of us live by that principle of uncompromising honesty, the kingdoms of this world can become the kingdom of our Lord.

On Being Yourself

CHARLES L. ALLEN, Grace Methodist Church, Atlanta, Georgia

The first step toward happiness and suc- ess in life is this: Be willing to be yourself. t is as Robert Louis Stevenson put it, "To e what we are, and to become what we are apable of becoming, is the only end of life." think the major cause of frustration, fail- re and unhappiness is our unwillingness o accept ourselves and be ourselves.

In the first place, not to be willing to be ourself is an insult to God. Consider these wo statements from the Bible: "All things were made by him; and without him was not anything made that was made" (John :3). "All things" includes me and you. esus said, "As my Father hath sent me, even so send I you" John 20:21).

Before you were born, you existed in the mind of God. He decided that the world needed you at a certain time, that there is something for you to do different from that of any other person. Everything God made has its own peculiar identity. There are billions of blades of grass but no two alike. No two snow flakes have ever been identical.

No person that ever existed is exactly like you. Even the print of your little finger is separate and distinct. It should lift you to a new realization of importance to know of all the billions of people the earth has known, there is only one of you.

A sixth grade teacher asked her class, "What is here in the world today that was not here fifteen years ago?" She expected them to name new inventions. One little boy held up his hand. "What is it Johnny that was not here fifteen years ago?" He replied, "Me." He was right. Something new came into the world when you were born. Something that God planned and wanted.

MY BEST POSSIBLE SELF

Second, when I accept myself as myself I begin working to make myself my best possible self. God made some men with mechanical abilities and some with artistic abilities. He made some women beautiful and he made some homely; he made some people short and others tall. While we can improve and develop ourselves, none of us can really change ourselves. Long ago I accepted the idea that God made me to be a preacher. Also, I accepted the idea that I wasn't made to be a Peter Marshall, a Norman Peale or a Ralph Sockman. He made

those men to do their work. As much as I may wish it were different, I also accepted the idea I was made to be a Charles Allen. So the only thing left for me is to do the best with Charles Allen that I can. That same thing is true for you.

Being willing to be yourself, will rid your life of all jealousy and envy. It will eliminate all feelings of inferiority. It will set you free to the giving of yourself to life as you have opportunity, without fear of failure or defeat. When you really decide to be yourself, you know you can succeed. That is the one thing you can do. It is when you secretly want to be someone else, that you become unhappy and begin to fail.

Every person is really two selves — the self we are and the self we have the possibility of becoming. Highest success will come to you when you begin to picture in your mind your best possible self.

Someone asked Thomas Edison how he accounted for his amazing inventive genius. He replied, "It is because I never think in words, I think in pictures." He pictured in his mind some object he desired to invent. This picture took possession of him. It would sink into his sub-conscious mind and, even while thinking of something else, the sub-conscious mind would be at work on it. Because the sub-conscious mind has marvelous creative power, he would get the flashes of insight, "creative hunches" he called them, and that accounted for his greatness.

A successful short story writer told me that he always wrote his stories backwards. First he wrote the ending and then would write the story to fit it. That is a good way to look at your own life. Get in mind the ending, your highest goal, and then you will naturally make your life the story to fit it.

Harold Sherman tells about a miserable lady who miserly saved her money but finally lost everything. She told him, "What I have feared has come. Here I am old and penniless. Now there is nothing for me but the poorhouse." He rebuked her: "There you go again. You thought poverty, you feared poverty. you pictured poverty until it came. Now you want the poorhouse. Keep thinking about it and that is exactly what you will get."

Being a wise counselor, he led her to think positively. She didn't regain her lost wealth, but she did later become employed as a companion to a woman of wealth and as such she traveled widely and became happier than she had ever been before. Yes, you must be yourself but be sure to think in terms of your best possible self.

Let me give you a simple plan that works. (1) Write down exactly what you want. Be specific and clear, don't deal with vague generalities. Keep working on it until you can state your goals in life in a hundred words or less. Be sure that is what you want.

(2) Read in your Bible Mark 11:24: "What things soever ye desire, when ye pray, believe that ye receive them, and ye shall have them." This is not as "magical" as it first sounds. If your desires are unreasonable and not according to the will of God, it will not be possible for you to believe.

(3) Read out loud to yourself what you have written at least twice a day for as many days as it takes for it to become the dominating thought of your mind. Let the picture take complete possession of you and then you will give yourself completely to that picture.

This may sound simple, but I tell you the results can be amazing.

THE BLESSED COMPANIONSHIP

Grace church has recently contracted with a firm in England for stained glass windows. There will be a total of twenty-five windows presenting the life of Christ. It was not too difficult to decide on the particular scenes to be used except in one case.

Which scene from His life should be in the window back of the pulpit and choir? Being the window the people will be looking into as they worship, we wanted to be sure it was the right one. Which one should it be? His birth, the Lord preaching, praying, the shepherd, the Last Supper, the Cross, or his Resurrection? Any of those would be appropriate but we did not select one of those.

Just before his ascension, he said to His disciples, "Go ye—and. lo, I am with you alway" (Matthew 28:19-20). That is the one we decided on for the central focal point in the church. Think about it. These disciples had committed so many blunders and they were limited men in so many ways. They had even denied their Lord and had acted in cowardly and shameful fashion. But in spite of that, Jesus was willing to trust his work into their hands and he promised his presence and power with them. Those men never faltered after that. They became happy, successful men. When we believe ourselves to be within the will of God and know he is helping us, we will not fail.

"Lo, I am with you." That assurance gives to one a sense of conquering support. Re

tly I was talking with a man who gives his time to putting on financial campgns. His company has been doing that rk for forty-one years and they know a about it. One rule they insist on is that citors go out in pairs. As a result of h experience, they have learned that two citors working together will raise four es as much money as one going alone.

esus understood that principle and when sent his disciple out, you remember the le tells us, "And he called unto him the lve, and began to send them forth by two l two" (Mark 6:7). There is strength in npanionship. Just before Christ ascended, gave them the assurance that he would be h them. They believed and did not doubt l because of his presence, they became querers of the world.

The realization of his presence gives us guidance. A man gave me this testimony: He was in serious difficulty. He thought about what he should do, asked his friends but everything he tried seemed to fail. One day he asked himself this question, "What would Christ do?" He asked that question honestly. That is, in asking he was also committing himself to the answer, whatever that answer might be. He found the answer and now that question has become the habit of his life.

"What would Christ do?" When we accept for ourselves the answer to that question, our shoulders straighten up, our eyes light up, power overcomes our weakness. and victory drives away our defeat. We look life straight in the eye as we say, "I can do all things through Christ."

hat Polonius Told Laertes

WILLIAM GODDARD SHERMAN, First Methodist Church, Stuart, Florida

This above all, — to thine own self be true, And it must follow as the night the day, Thou canst not then be false to any man.

olonius' advice to Laertes is one of the st quoted passages from Shakespeare, also one of the least understood. Our sp of the sentence is too superficial. We content to interpret it as meaning that must tell the truth and conduct our lives ording to impeccable ethical standards, l that this will suffice.

Whoever would be a man must do more n this. He must preserve not only his ics, but his individuality; herein lies the atness of man. By conforming to the y and unimaginative patterns of society n destroys his greatness.

One of the notable interviews of Jesus s with the Samaritan woman at the well. e spoke to him of the traditional worship the Jews, and Jesus responded with a at plea for individualism in worship: ut the hour cometh and now is when the e worshippers shall worship the Father spirit and in truth." Notice that, accordg to Jesus, these are the *true* worshippers. To thine own self be true, for the Father keth such to worship Him.

TRUE TO OURSELVES IN WORSHIP

Regimentation is the sin of civilization. n do not like to think for themselves, so ey allow themselves to be swept along in e currents of society, thus becoming free m the necessity of making decisions. We d the same books (mostly, it seems, lected by a book club to save us from deciding what is worth reading!), sing the same songs, eat the same foods, see the same shows. Everyone wears the same kin d of clothing, not because it looks good or is becoming in the least to the wearer, but because it is the style.

Regimentation is stifling to our individuality on the social level; in the spiritual realm it is fatal. Yet we have become so stereotyped in our worship that the Church is little more than a museum wherein we preserve the fossilized relics of the past. Like other museum-pieces, the relics are cold, dead, lifeless.

To thine own self be true. This means that in the area of worship you must be true to the inmost being which is yourself, and give scant concern to forms merely for the sake of tradition. The spirit of truth within the human soul must meet the Spirit of Truth which is the Infinite in a meaningful experience of communion. This alone is worship.

Those of us who are a part of the organized religion of Jesus Christ should see the dangers of dead forms. We are no more than ignorant men if we do not; we are hypocrites if, seeing their danger, we continue to engage them for their own ends. The tragedy of tradition is that it frequently serves as a substitute for a vital religion in the present.

The prophet Amos lashed out against an empty and stereotyped ceremonialism: "I hate, I despise your feasts, and I will take

no delight in your solemn assemblies." God's displeasure was not through any idea that the ritual was itself evil, but that it belonged to someone else. It was not their own. It was tradition without spirituality.

Too much of our present day Christianity is merely someone else's religion. We worship with set prayers because "the Church has always used them." But they are not our own. They are devoid of our own passion; they lack the blood and bone and marrow of those who utter them. We call up the past and revel in its memory, while our Church becomes a reliquary for ancient curios.

Every man's religion must be his own. Heritage and tradition are valuable only insofar as they fan the spark within our own souls, and cause us to worship the Father in spirit and in truth. What Wesley said or did — or Luther, or Calvin, or Paul, or even Jesus — is of little value unless it brings my own soul into communion with God.

TRUE TO OURSELVES IN DOCTRINE

It is significant that Jesus gave no set of doctrines to which we must subscribe before we can find the redemptive flow of God's power. It has remainded for his narrow and presumptuous followers to do this. The teachings of Jesus are more ethical than doctrinal.

The truth of God must not be bound nor bottled up. This we do when we confine it to a canon or a cred. Too many of us set forth a Credo, stating our assumptions or convictions, and suggest that this is both the near end and the far end of divine truth. More tragic still, we erroneously suggest that if a specific belief be beyond the sphere of our own creed or canon, then it must be false.

Truth, let it be observed, lodges in strange and unexpected quarters. It comes alive in realms least thought of. Men have ever tried to confine it to their formal creeds and conventional rituals, but God cannot be so restricted. Wherever God is, there is truth; wherever truth be, God too is found. We are hesitant to admit that wherever the affirmation rings in harmony with the Divine, whether it be in science, or nature, or someone else's religion, whatever be his creed, that is truth, and honors God.

Too much of our doctrine sounds a discord within our souls because it is not our own thinking. Orthodoxy may be completely unorthodox for one who merely affirms a belief because others believe it. To thine own self be true. Believe what the Spirit o God testifies to you, not what the worl tells you is orthodox.

Herein lay the strength of the convictio of the Apostle Paul. He told his hearers i clear and certain terms that he was pr claiming a doctrine which came not fro any other man, but from God. Paul's rel gion was of great vitality because his do trine came out of his own communion wit God. Had Paul only parroted the claims orthodoxy his Christianity would have bee without life.

Jesus said that we must worship God i spirit and in truth. He said nothing abo an imposed requirement to subscribe to pattern of dogmatic utterances. The Bib does not say that these are essential eve to being a Christian. A Christian is one wh believes that in Jesus Christ there is th most perfect revelation of the love of Go and that through him we come to an exper ence of God's redemptive grace. The who matter of salvation — however much or li tle may be bound up within that word - hinges only upon one's faith in Christ as th revealer of God's redemptive grace.

I ask no man to agree with me; I ask on that he be in agreement with God. For hi to be true to my doctrine might require th he be false to himself. This above all, thine own self be true. If you are true yourself and to God in your convictio then you cannot be false to any man.

TRUE TO OURSELVES IN BEHAVIOI

The problem which daily faces us is th of living our lives in accordance with o convictions in the face of a society whi may disagree. It is precisely because we fe the disapproval of society that we stifle o individuality and conform to the conve tional.

We have already said that God's tru may be known within our hearts. In thc moments when we enter into that sweet co munion with him we discover the highe and best. If we remain true to him, and ourselves, our behavior will be only a matt of applying divine truth to everyday expe ence.

Whether we conform to the ways of oth men is unimportant. The thing that matte is that we conform to the will and way God. It is by conformity to God's truth th we bring our own individuality to high expression; by conformity to the world destroy it.

Custom is a fearsome thing. It stunts t growth of the individual character. We a

than our best because we imitate the ys of others. We are our best only when potentialities God has placed within us permitted to be developed to their full. ividuality is your mark of greatness; troy that and you destroy yourself.

We are frequently asked, Is it wrong to thus and so? No stereotyped answer will fice. What may be wrong for one may be wrong for another, provided the thing itself is not evil. Some things may be rinsically wrong, others only relatively It appears that we reach an impasse, h no way to determine our behavior.

The solution lies in following that intuie knowledge which comes through a relice upon God. It may mean flying in the e of custom, but if it is in harmony with no blame will come from him. It may ll down the disfavor of society, but if it finds favor with God there is no criticism demanded.

The reverse is true: if an act be against the will of God then it is wrong, no matter how enthusiastically society may commend it. Consider Pilate, who yielded to the customs and demands of society in order to enjoy the approval of men. Had he followed intuitive knowledge he would have acted differently, for the testimony of God in his heart was against the condemnation of Jesus. He could have proved his greatness at that moment; the decision he made destroyed it.

We need less conformity to the ways of men, and more conformity to the truth of God. When the spirit within you finds harmony with the Spirit of God, then your soul will flower into the image and likeness of God.

iant Killers

WESLEY P. FORD, Central Christian Church, Pasadena, California

Jack, the hero in the story about the bean lk, was in many respects quite an ordiry lad. His adversary was a giant. But m the giant, Jack was able to steal the n that laid the golden eggs and also a bag money. Later he was able to kill the ghty giant. The reason for Jack's success as that the giant went to sleep. No matter strength of body or of character one y possess, if he lets his guard down, if he es to sleep on the job, he becomes the sy prey of those who would destroy him. ven giants are vulnerable when napping. t some giants seem never to sleep.

Recall a major incident concerning a ant and David who was to become the king Israel. The Philistines, who were at war th the Israelites, were camped on the side a mountain and the Israelites were opsite them on another mountain across a lley. "And there came out of the camp the Philistines a champion named Goliath hose height was six cubits and a span." cubit was the distance from a man's elw to the end of his middle finger, and a an was the measure from the thumb to e tip of the little finger; thus this giant as about nine and a half feet tall. Goliath lled to the Israelites asking them to send single man to fight with him, suggesting at the credit for the victory would belong the army whose representative won. But e Israelites were afraid of the giant. Each orning for forty days he made his chalnge, but there were no takers.

David's older brothers were in Israel's army but David, who was too young to count for much, was at home looking after the sheep. His father sent him to the encamped army with supplies for his brothers. While David was in camp the giant made his daily appearance and issued his challenge. David became interested but his interest was treated as a joke. He was the youngest of his family, inexperienced in warfare, only a shepherd. His brother chided him saying, "With whom have you left those few sheep?" But David went to the king and told him he was ready to fight the Philistine. King Saul told David that he was too young and inexperienced. But David had faith in his own ability and insisted.

Upon his insistance David was finally allowed to challenge the giant, who was disgraced for having to do battle with such a lad. But while the giant was chiding him because of his youth, David put a stone in his sling and threw it with such power and good aim that it killed the Philistine.

Now, against the background of this incomplete outline, consider come characteristics of David. It has always intrigued me that he was handsome. When Samuel was searching for the one to be anointed king he insisted that Jesse's youngest son come in from the field. This lad was David and the record says, "He had beautiful eyes and was handsome." One who is good looking can also be strong.

David was also a musician. The king had

chosen him to be his personal musician. So, whenever Saul was in a bad mood, David played the lyre and the king felt better. Here is evidence that a musician can be a real he-man. David played the lyre. Some boys think they miss a lot because they must practice the piano or violin, but here is one who because he had practiced got right into the king's palace. I know a family in which the mother insisted that the boy take piano lessons. Both the boy and the father agreed that piano lessons were for girls. To compensate for what the boy had to do, his father took him once a week to the wrestling matches. Dad's philosophy was that if he had to practice the piano he would also get to share in the ruggedness of manhood. David is an example of the fact that music and physical strength can be combined in a single life.

Note that David almost lost the chance to go to battle, for the king thought him too young. "You are not able," said Saul, "for you are but a youth." Then when he did go out to meet Goliath, the giant felt angry and disgraced because he had to fight a youth. Are we not here reminded that youth is frequently called to save the day? And we know also that youth often wins the battle. The world owes more to young people, to young men and young women, who have dared to do the impossible, than it can measure. It is young men and young women who come with vision, with enthusiasm and with courage to social problems of giant size. Jesus Christ was crucified at the age of thirty-three, and he, with a host of others, reminds us that it doesn't take long to live. Both the king and the giant sneeringly said, "You are but a youth." But the world has learned to say, "Thank God for youth!"

When Saul finally decided to let David go to battle he sent him with the Lord's blessing and clothed him with his own armor. So David wore the king's helmet of bronze and a coat of mail. But he was weighted down with the excessive metal armor, and he said to the king. "I cannot go with these for I am not used to them. So David put them off." Sometimes it is convenient to switch to another's clothes. The girls can borrow a formal and the fellows can rent a tux and off to the prom they go, and no one dares ask questions. But when we come up against the real issue where strength of character is concerned, each of us must wear his own clothes! No one can borrow another's honor, another's respect, or another's poise when the battle becomes difficult. So David chose to take his shepherd's staff, some stones, and his sling. He was a shepherd and these were his daily necessities. With these, and with only these, he was at home. David faced the giant with only that to which he was accustomed.

Now we come to the insight which is really the key to David's success. He answered the king's arguments concerning his youth and inability by saying, "Your servant used to keep sheep for his father." David's life had been as a shepherd. Being a shepherd then was a rugged business. There were lions and bears attacking the sheep. Hours were long, and on the barren hills there was little shade. While other boys might go fishing or racing their four-legged hot-rods, David had work to do. But because David had done his work well he said to Saul, "When there came animals to the flock, I went after them and smote them. Your servant has killed both lions and bears and this Philistine shall be one of them."

David could dare to face Goliath because he had been faithful in the humble task of keeping his father's sheep. "This job is like that," he said, and the giant in his mind became only a bear after his father's sheep. Many times David had hurled that sling while alone with the sheep. Because he knew what he had done while alone he knew what he could do while two armies and the king were watching. Do we realize the importance of doing well little ordinary jobs? Who knows when opportunity will say, "You have been faithful over a few things, I will make you ruler over many."

A further element in David's favor was his trust in God. He said to Saul, "The Lord who delivered me from the paw of the lion will deliver me from the hand of this Philistine." When the giant taunted and cursed him David replied, "You come to me with a sword and a spear, but I come to you in the name of the Lord of hosts, the God of Israel. And the battle is the Lord's." Later history provides evidence that no matter the size of the giant, or the fierceness of his attack, God's truth must ultimately prevail. The one who can bring life into harmony with the Divine purpose until he is sure that he goes in the name of the Lord will, in the long run, be on the winning side. Truth will prevail, for the battle is the Lord's.

II

Goliath is not the only Old Testament giant. The book of Genesis referring to the race of large persons says: "There were giants in the earth in those days." In Numbers is the account of the spies who were

to spy out the land of Canaan. They ght back an alarming report saying, ere we saw the giants, and we were in own sight as grasshoppers." Before such ts these who had gone to spy seemed as ll and as feeble as grasshoppers. And e are giants in the land now before h we seem as nothing. Who will go out eet them? Who will say, young though I I am able?

ne giant walking the earth is war. Pe- ically it gathers up men and grinds n to dust. Who will hear the voice of God mg, "They shall beat their swords into yshares and their spears into pruning s. Nations shall not lift up sword against on, neither shall they learn war any e." And who will hear the Master of saying, "Blessed are the peacemakers." n one goes to meet this giant some will ringly say, "He is only a youth." But o one overlook the fact that the battle e Lord's.

nother giant walking our earth is pov- . Poverty is taking its toll through dis- and hunger in a world that is over- ing with God's abundance. Through the d are millions seeking release from this ng, destroying giant. Once God said to es, "I have seen the affliction of my people. I will send you that you bring forth my people." It will take a daring youth to meet this adversary, but here too the battle is the Lord's.

We in America, blessed with knowledge and the Christian faith, have difficulty realizing that the giant ignorance also walks on the earth. Less than one-third of the people in the world are Christians. This is why communism spreads rapidly. People do not know a better way. To some the conquest of ignorance seems impossible. But there are youth saying, "Here am I. Send me." And through consecrated persons Christ walks in Japan, and the Philippines, and India, and Africa and this mocking Philistine, ignorance, will be destroyed. Giants, yes, but the battle is the Lord's.

Sometimes rather lightly we pray the Lord's Prayer. But did it ever occur to you, especially to you who are young, that it's pretty dangerous business to pray with sincerity, "Thy will be done"? Maybe God's will includes you who pray that prayer. Giants still walk our earth! David said to Saul, "Let no man's heart fail because of the giant. Your servant will go and fight with him." He was only a youth, but thank God for giant killers!

lping God

CLEO Y. BOYD, Immanuel Baptist Church, Detroit, Michigan

Scripture Lesson — II Thessalonians 3:6-13

id it ever occur to you that you can help ? There are some people who think of only in terms of what he can do for n; they give no thought to helping him. the great Apostle said, "We are laborers ther with God."

ne day I called at a certain home to t the people and invite them to church. was an attractive home. Every detail e of means and material comfort. When quired concerning their church affilia- . the lady replied that they had none. strange as it may seem," she said, "we never felt any need for a church. Oh, ourse, everyone has times when he gets a tight spot and prays, but outside of . I have never felt any need for God."

here are several things you might think t such persons. You might think, "How rt-sighted they are." Or you might think hem as parasites living in a lovely resi- tial community, enjoying its safety and standards, without contributing one bit he character-building agencies of the neighborhood without which they would not be safe and their property would be worthless. But apart from what you might think about them, this at least is clear. Her conversation indicated that the only way she thought of God was in terms of what help she might want from him. It never occurred to her, apparently, that it is a two-way proposition: that the Creator might like to have them make some contribution.

Every summer I go to visit an uncle of mine who is a retired farmer. For twenty-five years there has been hanging on the front of his neighbor's garage something which is now an antique. It is a wooden yoke once worn by oxen in plowing the fields. One notices as he looks at it that both sides of that yoke are equally worn, indicating that each time it was used there were two exen pulling together. Then we recall that Jesus said, "Come unto me, all ye that labor . . . take my yoke upon you." That meant not mere comfort; it meant work. It means that Christ calls all would-

be Christians to work along with Him.

It is quite revealing to turn to the Bible and see how many references it has to "work" as God's intention for man. You are familiar with the Ten Commandments. Did you know that one of them is a commandment to work? The fourth commandment is, "Remember the sabbath day, to keep it holy. Six days shalt thou labor." It has been our custom to think of that commandment only insomuch as it says one should not work on Sunday. But the remainder of the commandment is, "in six days shalt thou *work*." Anyone who does not work in some constructive way for God on the other days is breaking the commandment as much as the one who works on Sunday. The Apostle Paul added to this commandment by saying, "If any would not work, neither should he eat."

In the beginning God made this earth like a garden, and then made man, saying, "It is all for you." Fortunately for us God did not go away and leave it then, nor did he consider his work upon the earth as finished. God was not through working, neither was man. Rather, up to that time he had been doing it alone. From then on he was to have a helper. For in order to carry out his plans he needed man's help. This is one of the greatest honors that the Creator could possibly have bestowed upon us, to give us the privilege of being co-laborers with him. As the Psalmist said, "When I consider thy heavens, the work of thy fingers, the moon and the stars, which thou hast ordained; what is man, that thou art mindful of him?" What is man? Man is God's helper. What a thrill it is to realize, as St. Paul did, that "we are laborers together with God!"

This fact of helping God is something of which Jesus was always very conscious. "I must work the works of him that sent me while it is day, for the night cometh when no man can work." His whole attitude toward labor was once summed up by him like this: "My Father worketh hitherto and I work." That is all there was to it.

A normal healthy person enjoys working, and one who has a Christian view of life does not consider any type of work beneath his dignity. It is inconsistent for a Christion to feel that way. For the Christian attitude has been expressed by the writer of that hymn:

My Master was a worker
With daily work to do,
And he who would be like him
Must be a worker, too;
Then welcome honest labor
And honest labor's fare,
For where there is a worker
The Master's man is there.

My Master was a helper,
The woes of life he knew,
And he who would be like him
Must be a worker too.

Jesus believed and taught that this work has in it the possibilities of a Kingdom of Heaven. He instructed his disciples to pray for it. But more than something to pray for, it was a goal for which they were to work.

Since then many others have caught the vision of helping God. Among the notable examples was the Negro scientist, George Washington Carver. If ever there was a human being who fully sensed his partnership with God, it was he. He would regularly rise at four o'clock in the morning and start the day by talking with God and seeking to know his mind. Said he, "After the morning's talk with God I go forth into my laboratory and begin to carry out his wishes for the day." Is it any wonder that before he died it was estimated that it would take three freight cars to transport samples of his discoveries?

And there have been those like Antonio Stradivari. George Elliot, in her masterful poem about him, says the neighbors thought him dull. Naldo, a painter who gambled and thought he knew all there was to know at the age of thirty-one, taunted him, asking him what his motive was for working so hard. Why not take it easy like others? For at the age of eighty he was still patiently at work. Was it his desire for gold that led him on?

Antonio answered:

I like gold—well, yes—but not for meals.
And as my stomach, so my eye and hand,
And, inward sense that works along with both,
Have hunger that can never feed on coin.

As the conversation between them continues, the real motive for his labor is revealed.

When any master holds
'Twixt chin and hand a violin of mine,
He will be glad that Stradivari lived . . .
And while He gives them skill
I give them instruments to play upon,
God choosing me to help Him . . .
He could not make

ntonio Stradivari's violins
ithout Antonio.

od needs our help. His purposes and
s for the world cannot be carried out
pt by him and us working together.
nink for a moment of our part in
er. What I know about electricity is
little. It is one thing which no one
understands. Yet there are some facts
t it that are known to all of us. We
w that behind this electrical current
e must be somewhere a central power-
se from which it comes. But we also
w that we could not enjoy the conven-
e of electric lights and programs by ra-
and television without a great many
le performing their respective labors to
e it possible. Even then, after all has
made ready for us, it is up to us to
the knob of press the button. To get
lts there is a part that each must do.
do not know why the power of God does
change people's lives without men pray-
I do not know why God cannot bring
e upon the earth without people pray-
I do not know why God does not do
y other things without our praying. But
ve observed as a matter of fact that it
lly is not done until we people join
ds with him and complete the circuit.
od needs our help in many ways to do
work today. Let me read to you from a
r that was received by a certain Gos-
broadcaster:

"Maybe you will get a laugh out of
y letter, and maybe you will throw it
the wastebasket. But to one who is
roping in the dark it is *serious*. First,
don't know what to believe, or why,
if I should bother to believe any-
ing. I have been reading the * * * *
nd it has gotten me worried. I wonder
ow if there might be something to
hristianity after all. I got so that I did
ot believe in God, or in a hereafter.
But now your magazine comes along
and worries me. It is awful to not know
if there is really a God, and a hereafter.
Is it just a leap into a dark empty void?
I would take my own life, but I am
afraid to. Please, is there any hope for
me?"

A letter with Gospel literature was sent to this woman, in response to which they received the following letter shortly thereafter:

"I received your letter today. Somehow it rang true. I did not expect an answer, and if I got one I thought that it would be cold, and reserved. But it was warm and personal. I also read some of the little leaflets which you sent to me. It is too good a message. If I were twenty or thirty years old, instead of fifty years, it would be different, but I cannot offer your God ashes for joy. Oh, if someone had only explained things before, or given me hope. Just to think of all that I have missed. No one ever came to my home and told me about God. No one ever invited me to Sunday School."

Strange that God could not have given that soul the Light without someone's help. But the fact is

"God has no hands but our hands
To do his work today;
He has no feet but our feet
To lead men in his way;
He has no tongue but our tongues
To tell men how he died;
He has no help but our help
To bring them to his side . . .

What if our hands are busy
With other work than his?"

Whoever you are, whether you are young or old, there is something you can do to help God. He needs your help. Will you enlist today?

nat Will Be, Will Be — or Will It?

GENE W. BRICE, First Christian Church, Alpine, Texas

a person does not have to be a linguist to
w what quite a few foreign phrases
an these days. Unless you have been
specting in Alaska, or unless you are
ne deaf, you have heard over and over
in this past year a song with a catchy
e and cute words, the title of which is
ne sera, sera," which means, "What will
will be." The song won an academy award as best motion picture song of the year. The tune is so appealing that I, with millions of Americans, found myself singing it over and over again. In fact, I sang it so long, that one day I began to wonder whether or not I believed what I was singing. What will be, will be; and I have no right to attempt to change it. But do *you* believe it? Is your future already planned

for you, and are you merely following a prearranged path?

Judged by the terminology we use, many of us certainly do. How often in a thunderstorm, we say, "Well, I don't worry about the lightning—if my time is up, it is up."

A soldier boy returns home and describes a fierce battle which did not bring him injury. He says, and we nod our heads, "None of those bullets had my number on it." The assumption is always tacitly made that God, of course, assigns the numbers to the bullets.

Even legal terminology accepts this idea. The legal phrase, "an act of God," means a catastrophe for which insurance companies are not responsible. This phrase is always reserved for the greatest tragedies; the great catastrophes are always "acts of God."

There are two effects of the belief that what will be, will be, and we might as well accept it. The first is security. We have faith in God's goodness and in his power over the world. What is to be, will be—and we can rest confident in that belief. The second effect is when faith gives way to fatalism. Its offspring becomes irresponsibility. "What will be, will be—so why should we worry about something we cannot change.

As a result, evils abide, and we tolerate them, because what will be, will be—and we cannot change that. So when Jenner invented the smallpox inoculation, church people objected furiously. Smallpox was God's punishment for sin—what will be, will be.

James Simpson met the same reaction when he discovered chloroform for use in relieving pain at childbirth. Church leaders objected—God had ordained women to suffer during childbirth. What will be, will be.

Newspapers in the southwest now carry many letters to the editor that protest efforts of scientists to seed clouds, and so increase rainfall. That is God's business, the letters say. What will be, will be.

The trouble is that this tendency goes over into moral and religious reforms. Why try to change either the world or mankind? What will be, will be, so what's the use?

Woodrow Wilson discovered in championing the League of Nations an alternative of war. Do away with war? There will be wars and rumors of wars until the end of time. So said his critics. But this is hard to believe. Jesus said, "Peace I leave with you—my peace I give to you." This statement carries much more weight than any other statement concerning rumors of wars. Yet, the newspapers not long ago carried th story of the Michigan town which erecte a four-sided stone monument to its wa dead—one side for the First World Wa one side for the Second World War, on side for the Korean conflict, and one sid for "wars yet to come." What will be, wi be.

II

But what does the Bible say about all this A reader will find in the Bible statement that can be interpreted in different way He will discover some statements that Pa made about some events being predestine by God. He will find some statements Christ directed against worrying about th future: "If God so clothes the lilies of th field and cares for them, will he not c even more for you?" Despite these stat ments, the student of the Bible will find, a a thread running the length and breadth the Bible, the belief that the individual h the responsibility for deciding the course his life. All of us, in reading the Bible, wi see men confronted with decisions abo their life, decisions which *they* make, ar not God. We see men faced with situatio where they must act, one way or another.

God puts us in situations where we mu choose, but he has given us good tools f choosing rightly. Look what happened wh God created us. He could have made us me actors in a divine play, where our roles we already drawn up, and we merely act o our roles as puppets. We would have n choices in life. Instead, God created us his image, meaning that he created us wi the ability to choose between good and ev Whichever of these two forces we choo becomes our master.

One thing is absolutely certain in life we have a master which will direct o lives. Our master will either be good, b evil. Jesus said that we cannot serve bo of them. Our freedom is that we can choo which of these two we will serve.

If this is true, how is it that life so oft goes bad for us? How do we find ourselv in real moral messes in life? Simply b cause we bind ourselves to the wrong ma ter, and we cannot act independently them. The best illustration of this is for ing a habit. We do something we know should not do. If we really chose to, could refrain from doing that particul thing again. We could quit, if we cho But we decide that the particular action pleasing—too pleasing to stop—and so do it again and again, until one day we d

r that we can't stop doing it. It has me our master.

his is much like a man making a cable. first tiny strand used is so small that a weak man could break it. But it is en in with another strand, and another, another, until it becomes as thick as a 's wrist, and alive with strength, and world's strongest man could not break it. oes God decide—predestinate — that we ll become slaves to certain habits? No. gives us the right to choose, and we de- we shall become slaves to these habits n we choose wrongly. Shakespeare's racter who said, "The fault, dear Bru- lies not in our stars, but in ourselves, we are underlings," was looking not at his own day, but ours as well. God n't cause our weaknesses. Our own spir- laziness causes them, and we ourselves the ones to be blamed.

you want to, then, it is perfectly all t to say, or to sing, "What will be, will but in your own heart, you'd better nd the statement to read:

What I decide my soul will be, it will be . . . "

What I decide my church membership will be, it will be . . . "

What I decide I'll give to my church, I will give . . . "

there's blame to be established in our s, we should not put it on God. We uld put it where it belongs, in our own rts.

he preface to the show, *I'll Cry Tomor-*, has this interesting statement by its oine, Lillian Roth, a woman who yielded drink and became a worthless alcoholic ore finding herself once more: "What pened in my life, my failings and my ievements, were decided and written n eons before my life began." That nds very good, but it is not true. God n't foreordain that Lillian Roth would an alcoholic; she did, by her own weak- s and her inability to resist temptation. erhaps this sounds hard, unfair, but lis- . God gave that woman the ability to ose between right and wrong—and she chose wrong. I stress this because you and I so often excuse ourselves for our own weaknesses in exactly the same way. We blame God for our own weaknesses. But ask yourself:

Did God decide I was going to fail my English course in school? *No.* God decided I could choose to do about English as I wished, and *I* decided I was going to fail it when I decided to go to the show every night, or watch TV, instead of studying English.

Did God decide I was going to become an alcoholic? *No.* God decided I could choose the friends I would associate with, and *I* decided I would become an alcoholic when I associated myself continually with those who expected me to drink in order to get along with them.

Did God decide that my religious faith wouldn't be sufficient when tragedy came? *No.* God decided I could do as I pleased concerning my church attendance and worship, and *I* decided my religious faith wouldn't be sufficient when I decided the picture show was more important on Sunday evening than worshipping God.

Did God decide that my youngster would grow up unable to think of the church as important or necessary in his life? *No.* God decided that I was mature enough to lead my child religiously in the right way, and *I* decided that child would get into trouble, or abandon religion, when I didn't show him by my actions that I thought church important.

Did God decide that I was going to come to the end of my earthly life without ever having achieved anything good and beautiful, ending life a poor, miserable wretch of a man who could look back on nothing worthwhile in his life? *No.* God decided that I could choose between good and evil, and *I* decided I would live a worthless life when in a hundred thousand small decisions of life, I chose the easy path of evil.

I commend to your thinking the words of a prophet of old: "Choose you this day whom you will serve. As for me and my house, we will serve the Lord."

BOOKS FOR PULPIT PREACHING

Continued from page 2

lating book by Harold E. Kohn, a Charlevoix (Michigan) minister, and an accomplished artist. Forty informal essays are illustrated by as many brush and ink drawings. The varied world of nature, much of it unknown to the layman, comes to life through the discernment, appreciation and enthusiasm of the author, who relates the world about him to his Creator. Much of the book is rich in homiletic possibilities. (Eerdmans, 172 pp., $3.)

Jean Pierhal's *Albert Schweitzer: The Story of His Life* is something more than just another book about the great missionary-doctor. This authorized biography is a splendid introduction to the man, his mind and his work. Written with a compelling and graphic pen, the book delineates the many fascinating aspects of the missionary's life and offers wide areas for understanding and appreciation. (Philosophical Library, 160 pp., $3.)

The Faith of Israel by H. H. Rowley concerns seven aspects of Old Testament thought: revelation, the nature of God, the nature of man, individual and community, the good life, death and beyond, and the Day of the Lord. Here is readable, lucid scholarship at its best, written in such a way as to make the profound seem apparent and the distant seem relevant. This distinctive contribution to present-day interpretation of the great themes of the Old Testament will be welcomed by pastors and Sunday school teachers. (Westminster, 220 pp., $3.50)

The Twelve by Edgar J. Goodspeed relates the story and message of Christ's apostles according to the scattered evidence of the New Testament and the more generous information provided by subsequent tradition. What can be said authoritatively and what can be surmised are added to the author's appreciation of the true greatness of th Twelve. (Winston, 182 pp., $3.50)

Let Not Your Heart Be Troubled by J. Robert Watt contains twenty-eight brief in spirational messages for the bereaved. Ad mirably suited for funeral talks, these cha ters also have a manner of expression an a simplicity in exposition which makes th book suitable for reading by the bereave (Abingdon, 125 pp., $2.)

The Theology of the Sacraments by Don ald M. Baillie is a brilliant discussion of th sacraments, their meaning, interpretatio and significance. Included in the volume ar two addresses, one on freedom of the wi and the other a particularly valuable me sage on "The Preaching of Christian Do trine." An introductory chapter, "Donald A Brother's Impression," by John Bailli is written in moving and eloquent pros (Scribners, 158 pp., $3.)

Thirty-seven Greek words which are in portant to an understanding of the gosp are defined and discussed in *A New Testa ment Wordbook* by William Barclay. Eac chapter explains the meaning of a word t those who used and those who first hear it, and describes the various connotation and denotations which make the word mea ingful to Bible readers. (Harper, 128 pp $2.50)

Are the teachings of Jesus too difficu for us? Roy Pearson in *The Hard Command of Jesus* presents twelve of Christ's "diffi cult" commands (love your enemy, do n be anxious, take up your cross, be perfec among others). "Some of Jesus' comman are hard," writes the author, "because w do not understand their meaning; othe because, understanding them, we do n believe them; and still others because, b lieving them, we do not have the coura to obey them." The sermons in this bo may suggest to many a preacher a serm series of incalculable worth. (Abingdo 125 pp., $2.)

rth Quoting

PAUL HOVEY, Congregational-Presbyterian (Federated) Church, Lewiston, Idaho

ne basic problem of our time is spiritual. cannot cure it with a philosophic or omic doctrine. You might as well put nd-aid on a cancer. It goes much deeper that. And the remarkable thing of our is the reawakening of interest in reli-, in faith, the consciousness that man not live here, in a lasting city, that 's life is not bounded on the East by h and on the West by death, and on North and South by Dun & Bradstreet, the greatest book he can write is not a kbook, that there are elements inside that must be frustrated unless they their fulfillment and fruition in faith. he new dimension of faith . . . is a re-ion of the wild and hysterical optimism ch staked man's life out merely in this ld. It is a recalling and a reconfirming he old truths, that each human individ-is a sacred and a holy being, that there be no talk of man's brotherhood, unless admits the necessarily correlative con- of God's common Fatherhood.

e would do well as Americans, of dif-nt theological persuasions, united in our ericanism and in our motto, "In God We st," to pause in a strictly technical and ustrial congress to reaffirm these things, use more and more, those who threw n away in the wild optimistic way at turn of the century have gone back to for them again.

hese convictions have penetrated our ools, our factories and our individual s. This . . . is the new dimension of faith. grant we shall have the life and the ngth to live by it.

William A. Donaghy in *Vital Speeches*

* * *

ne of the most tragic aspects of our e is the mistake so many of us make ch is actually the same one the Indian ericans made before us. The white men sented them with worthless baubles and Indians gave up in return things of en-ous value which could not be replaced. y bartered away their hills and valleys, r fields and meadows, their forests and odlands for nothing at all.

o we today are selling our souls scarcely cheaply. We lay up our treasures on th, where both moth and rust can cor-t and thieves break through and steal. are trading our lives for the things that shall have to leave behind us when we go from here.

Roy M. Pearson, "Rest Remembrance Rejoicing" in *Advance*

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Edwin O. Berreth of the Federated Church of Milton-Freewater, Oregon, writes: "The constitution of this church says, concerning the trustees: 'Any member missing three regular trustee meetings consecutively and without cause shall be automatically replaced by a selection of the other members of the Trustee Board with the approval of the Church.' Make one wonder: What would happen if all committees and boards in the church and community follow such a ruling. I wonder . . ." And what if the same ruling were put in force regarding church members?

From *Spires*

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Religion helps men find directions. There is no doubt but what the whole world is at times off the beam, maybe even clear upside down. Religion can help tremendously in the finding of direction in such a world.

Railroads have often taken a lot of ribbing from the fact that trains so seldom run on time. Yet each railroad man must use a watch that is accurate down to the split second. Somebody dared ask a train conductor why this was so. "Why," he said, "it is so we can always tell exactly how late we are." Religion can at least do that for us . . . I would like to suggest that you read again the Sermon on the Mount. I have a very keen feeling that if the instruments in our own lives respond to the . . . signals given there we shall not be far off the baseline.

Ed Cunningham, *The Great Highway*

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The object of teaching a child is to enable him to get along without his teacher.

Elbert Hubbard

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Let no youth have any anxiety about the upshot of his education, whatever the line of it may be. If he keeps faithfully busy each hour of the working day, he may safely leave the final result to itself. He can with perfect certainty count on waking up some fine morning to find himself one of the competent ones of his generation in whatever pursuit he may have singled out.

Williams James

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The human being that can learn no more

has parted with the only priceless possession in the human inheritance. The men, women or nations that harden in their mold, get set in their ways, crystalize this opinions and beliefs, and swear by and live according to their routine habits—such men, women or nations are old; senile decay is at hand, and in them creative evolution has ceased to function.

George A. Dorsey, *Why We Behave Like Human Beings* (Harpers)

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The slowness of Nicodemus to comprehend, whether it was actual or feigned, earned Christ's astringent retort. What equipment could he possess to be a teacher in Israel if a simple illustration from nature like the wind in the trees was beyond his grasp? Christ sometimes checked on how much was being absorbed by his hearers with the pick question, "Have you understood all these things?" After the incomparable lesson of the washing of the feet of his friends before the last Passover, he said: "Have you understood what I have just done to you?" The good teacher knows that uninterpreted experiences and undigested verbal material alike are not merely the absence of education. They are bad education.

Gerard S. Sloyan in *The Commonweal*

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In one swift, compact sentence Polybius, the old historian, compressed the history of a nation's decadence and death, the while he immortally summed up the mentality which we have come to call secularism. "In Carthage," he wrote, "no one is blamed, however he may have gained his wealth." With that as her text, our own American essayist, Agnes Repplier, in her autobiography, commented with savage incisivness: "A pleasant place, Carthage, no doubt, for business enterprise; a place where young men were taught to get on, and extravagance kept pace with shrewd finance. A self-satisfied place, self-confident, money-getting, woman-loving people, honoring success and hugging their fancied security, while in far-off Rome Cato pronounces their doom."

* * *

Her words recall the dramatic moment in Arthur Conan Doyle's short story, when the Carthaginians, assembled on a height overlooking the sea, breathlessly watched the lone ship of their invincible Navy approach. . . . All day long, they prayed to whatever faceless gods they adored, and when the twilight came, out of the blue there bloomed one sail, a lone Carthaginian galley. Was she the harbinger of victory? . . . . Even as they watched and wondered, the answer came to them with dramatic suddenness, for out of the blue there slid two lithe, fast Roman raiders to grapple with and crush and sink the last lone survivor of the Carthaginian fleet. And then Rome began her great career . . . The frightening thing is that there have been cities in the United States for which that description of Polybius . . would be perfectly apt.

William A. Donaghy in *Vital Speeches*

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Our Declaration of Independence said that "all men are created equal." Its author Thomas Jefferson, believed that "all eyes are opening to the thoughts of man . . . The mass of mankind was not born with saddles on their backs, nor a favored few, booted and spurred, ready to ride them by the grace of God."

Tom Paine spoke of the "small spark kindled in America" that would never be extinguished. Washington was certain that democracy throughout the world was "finally staked on the experiment attributed to the American people," and remarked that he felt "irresistibly excited whenever in any country I see an oppressed people unfurl the banner of freedom."

His successor, John Adams, said that the development of American democracy was the "opening of a grand scene and design of Providence for the emancipation of the slavish part of mankind all over the earth."

"The right of revolution," said Lincoln, "is a most sacred right; a right which we believe is to liberate the world." Our revolution, he thought, would ease the lot of peoples "over a great portion of the globe."

A few years later General Ulysses Grant spoke of the sympathy of the American people for all whose "who struggle for liberty and self-government."

What the peoples of Asia, Africa and South America expect from us today is not a departure from this tradition but a bold reaffirmation of it.

Chester Bowles in *Vital Speeches*

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Worry is the mind going around in circles wearing holes in itself. Worry is giving long and painful thought to what cannot be changed by any amount of thinking. It is grief or distress that hinders useful action. It is the cinder in the eye of wisdom.

Kenneth J. Foreman, *How To Stop Worrying*

* * *

ue kind of worry that gets us down is
king in a circle, going over and over a
er without arriving anywhere. We lie
ke with a kind of merry-go-round whirl-
n our minds. We think, "I ought to give
ny job and try for something better . . .
jobs are hard to get . . . If I give up
ob I may not get another . . . I'm get-
older . . . jobs are harder to get . . ."
so it goes around the circle, over and
again. We never come to a conclusion
use we are not thinking — we're just
rying.

Alvin E. Magary, *The Right Way To Worry*

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he prophet Isaiah once made a joke
t people who are too self-centered. He
"The bed is shorter than that a man
stretch himself on it and the covering
arrower than that he can wrap himself
t." It sounds pretty uncomfortable,
n't it? That's the man whose life is not
enough. He is cramped into too small a
e. There is nothing in that kind of life
ive us rest or keep us warm.

nd so I say, you should worry, not about
self—not only about you and your wife
your son John and his wife—but about
concerns of men and women who have
ther claim upon you except that they
in trouble and in need. And the more
think of their troubles and their needs
the more you do to help them, the less
ll worry about yourself.

Alvin E. Magary

* * *

me time ago a business man drew up
t he called a "Worry Chart," in which
ept a record of his worries. He discover-
hat 40 percent of them were about things
probably would never happen; 30 per-
concerned past decisions that he could
now unmake; 12 percent dealt with oth-
people's criticisms of him; 10 percent
e worries about his health. He concluded
only 8 percent of them were really legi-
ate.

Franics Ellis in *The Pulpit*

* * *

o very often anxieties get the best of the
rrier and it is then that trouble begins.
word "anxiety" is a very ancient one. It
es from a little Latin word "ango" which
ns "to press or squeeze; to give physical
n, thus leading to mental, and thus to
se anguish." No argument is needed to
t out that this is a perfect description
what happens when our worries get the
t of us. How often the anxious person says, "I feel shut up and squeezed in." Very simply it can be said that worry and anxiety weaken the body and undermine the mind. When this begins to happen the very purpose of our life is affected. We lose sight of the reason for our being. We forget that God has placed us in the world for a purpose. Once this purpose is clouded by anxiety, self takes over and sin begins. Perhaps essentially what has happened is that our anxiety has caused us to attempt to take the place of God. This is in itself a great sin.

F. Douglas Henderson, *Anxiety: The Cause and the Cure*

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Anxiety is most often the result of imagination, and imagination is a gift of God. It can, therefore, be assumed that the greater the imagination the more prone to anxiety. This, of course, does not make the over-anxious person right in the eyes of God. Jesus points this out very forcibly in the Sermon on the Mount.

F. Douglas Henderson

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A worrier is not necessarily a bad or inferior person. On the contrary, it is generally the more able, the more high-spirited, the more serious and responsible people who are most tempted to worry. Worrying is done by people with strong imaginations, people who have deep concern for the success of some enterprise, who are keenly interested in the welfare of other persons.

Kenneth J. Foreman, *How To Stop Worrying*

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Don't tell me that worry doesn't do any good. I know better. The things I worry about don't happen!

From *The Watchman-Examiner*

* * *

Worry is a sign of civilization, and anyone without a worry has a guilty feeling that he has turned into a barbarian.

Hal Boyle

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An important procedure for eliminating the injury done to you by worry is to substitute for it a good emotion of more powerful force and influence. And, of course, that stronger, good emotion is faith. The best way to eradicate worry from your mind is simply to displace it with faith. Faith is more powerful than worry. But this will be effective only as you work at it diligently and consistently.

At first you may have only a little faith, and that little not at all strong. But it is remarkable how rapidly faith grows as you

sincerely practice and exercise it. Incidentally, the way you made your worry strong was by reported practice of it.

Norman Vincent Peale

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We cannot minimize the inestimable consequences of the sacrifice of Christ. When we face the crucified Christ and let His love sink into our heart and conscience, His spirit of devotion must surely well up and pour forth. Thanks not to anything in us, but thanks to Him, we become different folks to live with. When we are "drowned in the seas of this love" we find ourselves in a new and particular relation to our fellows. We experience somewhat the bounds of love which knit together the early Christians. And, as we discover it, we find ourselves increasingly conscious of "the body of Christ which is His church."

Archie H. Hook

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Tears: condensation caused by a cold world meeting a warm heart.

Marcelene Cox

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I think it was the book, *Moment in Peking,* in which the head of the household went daily to a "self-examination hall" in a remote garden for solitary contemplation. No one goes off to examine himself for fun. It is never a very flattering trip. But if we honestly long to come anywhere near to the meaning.... we have no choice except to clear away our self-centered concerns, to open our eyes to the shoddiness of our attitudes—attitudes become deceptively comfortable and respectable through long use. Clothing every act is an attitude—fashionable, traditional, self-gratifying, crass, vulgar or unselfish, shining with goodness. Attitudes! The whole world turns by them.

Betty Ormsbee Mould in *Outreach.*

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Have you found difficulty in reading your Bible profitably? Try skimming through it somewhat as you would go touring through a lovely countryside this summer.

When you set out for a drive in the country you do not stop at every turn of the road to investigate, study and analyze the scenery or the situation. Instead, you drive along watching for the thing that may invite your interest. When you come to a spot of surpassing beauty, you stop, take time to enjoy it and then drive on when your inclination suggests.

Roy L. Smith

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We have lost the habit of thinking quietly of trying to know ourselves and our friends and the world around us, and the God who is above and within us. We are looking in the wrong places for happiness. We are so exclusively occupied with material things and with their accumulation that the higher values are crowded out.

Robert J. McCracken

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Money spent in bringing children up to be strong, intelligent, and resourceful is the best saving, both for the individual and for civilization.

Margaret Culkin Banning

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If you believe in the Lord, He will do half the work—but the last half He helps those who help themselves.

Cyrus K. Curtis